

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3786 would authorize the exchange of land within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area for a private parcel adjacent to the park.

Mr. Speaker, a land exchange issue is very complex, and I want to take this opportunity to commend my colleague, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON), for his work in ushering this bill to the subcommittee and committee and getting it to the floor today.

As all of my colleagues are aware, there continues to be great concern regarding exchanges in general. In many instances, it is not at all clear that the taxpayers are receiving full value for the lands being traded away in their names. In fact, in many instances, it is clear they are not. We remain committed to developing a comprehensive approach that might address the failures in the current exchange process.

In the meantime, it is our hope that we would only approve specific exchanges that truly serve the best interests of the taxpayers, and it appears we have such an exchange in this instance.

The basic concept of the exchange contained in H.R. 3786 appears to serve both the interests of the private landowner as well as the park. In addition, once authorized, this exchange will go through a full NEPA process, including appraisals, which should identify and address any remaining issues.

We support passage of H.R. 3786.

Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her support and kind words; and, having no more speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3786, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1415

#### NEW RIVER GORGE BOUNDARY ACT OF 2002

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3858) to modify the boundaries of

the New River Gorge National River, West Virginia.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3858

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "New River Gorge Boundary Act of 2002".

#### SEC. 2. NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS.

(a) BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.—Section 1101 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460m-15) is amended by striking "NERI-80,028A, dated March 1996" and inserting "NERI 80,034, dated May 2001".

(b) LAND EXCHANGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall complete a fee simple land exchange in the vicinity of Beauty Mountain, Fayette County, West Virginia, to acquire a tract of land identified as NERI Tract Number 150-07 that lies adjacent to the boundary of the New River Gorge National River in exchange for a tract of land identified as NERI Tract Number 150-08 located within such boundary.

(2) TREATMENT OF EXCHANGED LANDS.—Upon the completion of such land exchange—

(A) the land acquired by the United States in the exchange shall be included in the boundaries, and administered as part, of the New River Gorge National River; and

(B) the land conveyed by the United States in the exchange shall be excluded from the boundaries, and shall not be administered as part, of the New River Gorge National River.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAN MILLER of Florida). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON).

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3858, introduced by the ranking member of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), would authorize the expansion of the boundary of the New River Gorge National River in West Virginia.

The New River Gorge National River was established in 1978 to preserve and protect approximately 53 miles of the free-flowing New River. It was also designated an American heritage river in July of 1998. The rugged New River flows northward through deep canyons and is considered to be among the oldest rivers on the continent. The National River Park unit presently encompasses approximately 70,000 acres. The park contains miles of hiking trails and even some mountain biking and horseback trails.

This bill would modify the boundaries of the park unit to take in six tracts of land, totaling 1,962 acres, from five different owners, all of whom are willing sellers. The modification to the boundary would allow for the preservation of scenic viewsheds within the park as well as accommodating certain recreational activities within the park. The bill would also address an encroachment issue in which a property owner unknowingly built his private

home within the boundaries of the park. This encompasses approximately only a third of an acre.

The bill is supported by both the majority and the minority, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3858, introduced by my colleague and the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), would modify the boundary of the New River Gorge National River in West Virginia to add approximately 1,962 acres to the park and correct a minor boundary encroachment.

The proposed boundary modifications would enhance the management and use of the resource values of the New River. These additions consist of six tracts of land held by five owners, all of whom are willing sellers. The legislation would also correct the very minor boundary encroachment with a private landowner who has inadvertently constructed a portion of a home on Federal land.

The Committee on Resources held a hearing on H.R. 3858, and the bill was favorably reported by the committee last month. I would note that the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) worked closely with the National Park Service on the development of this legislation, and I want to commend him for his long-standing efforts to provide for the protection and the use of the New River Gorge National River.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the favorable consideration of H.R. 3858 by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3858.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials in the RECORD on the three bills just considered, H.R. 3937, H.R. 3786, and H.R. 3858.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

**PROVIDING FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF FOREST SERVICE FIREFIGHTER DEATHS CAUSED BY WILDFIRE ENTRAPMENT OR BURNOVER**

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3971) to provide for an independent investigation of Forest Service firefighter deaths that are caused by wildfire entrapment or burnover.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3971

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION OF FOREST SERVICE FIREFIGHTER DEATHS.**

(a) INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION.—In the case of each fatality of an officer or employee of the Forest Service that occurs due to wildfire entrapment or burnover, the Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture shall conduct an investigation of the fatality. The investigation shall not rely on, and shall be completely independent of, any investigation of the fatality that is conducted by the Forest Service.

(b) SUBMISSION OF RESULTS.—As soon as possible after completing an investigation under subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department of Agriculture shall submit to Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture a report containing the results of the investigation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise today in support of H.R. 3971, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. HASTINGS), to provide for an independent investigation of Forest Service firefighter deaths that are caused by wildfire entrapment or burnover.

Today, as we debate this issue, large wildfires are burning across the country. Over 1.4 million acres have already been consumed, and the worst may be yet to come. The devastating fires that are burning right now warrant the passage of this legislation. This bill provides for a thorough and unbiased investigation of firefighter fatalities by an independent source.

Firefighting is an inherently dangerous job, and we should do what we can to reduce the risks. I believe the main purpose for this legislation is to prevent future deaths from occurring.

However, it is important to remember that the most effective way to prevent firefighter fatalities is to prevent catastrophic wildfires from occurring in the first place.

Our Nation's forests are in desperate need of good management to restore them to a state where they can endure natural low-intensity wildfires, wildfires that are more predictable and, therefore, safer for firefighters and communities by preventing the extreme and erratic behavior that makes fighting fires so dangerous. It is very simple logic. The best way to prevent firefighter deaths is to prevent catastrophic wildfires.

Due to past instances and the fires currently burning across the Nation, I believe this bill provides another tool for the well-being of firefighters. In so doing, I hope that we will not lose focus on the more important point of preventing wildfires through the healthy management of our forest land.

This legislation is important and strives to ensure mistakes causing deaths are not made twice. It ensures our Nation's commitment to the safety of firefighters. The integrity for investigations of firefighter deaths should not be jeopardized, and by passing this legislation we move to address the issue of creating safer environments for firefighters by preventing catastrophic wildfires.

I urge the Members of this body to join me in taking this important step today. By passing H.R. 3971, we can renew the efforts for firefighter protection and move on to ultimate safeguards for firefighters, which are the management of healthy forests and the prevention of catastrophic wildfires.

I congratulate the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) for his introduction of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join me in declaring a strong complement to the safety of firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3971; and I want to commend the sponsors of this legislation, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT), the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN), but also on our side the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) for introducing this bill.

I think it is important, especially as we look at the fires that are raging in the West today, that we provide for an investigation of any deaths that might occur, as well as the deaths that oc-

curred last year. So I am pleased to stand here in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. HASTINGS), the author of the legislation.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the massive wildfires burning out of control in Arizona today are on the front pages of newspapers all across America reminding people in other parts of the country of the enormous threat these dangerous fires pose to both lives and property.

Westerners, however, need no such reminders because we live with the destructive power of wildfires year in and year out. At this time each summer, as the fire season gets under way, thousands of men and women strap on their gear and head out to fire lines seeking to contain one of the most destructive natural forces known to man.

Fighting wildfires is dirty, dangerous, and, at times, terrifying work. Those who do it face risks most of us can hardly imagine. They do so knowing that with first-rate training, equipment, and leadership, their efforts will help protect the lives and property of those caught in the path of raging wildfires.

Often, firefighters are injured in the line of duty. Sometimes, tragically, lives are lost on the fire line. In some cases, the cause is beyond anyone's control, other times mistakes are made. And mistakes will inevitably be made in these situations, which are so extraordinarily challenging to both the mind and the body.

Each time tragedy strikes in this way, it is only natural to seek to understand precisely what happened and why. Mr. Speaker, that desire is at the heart of this legislation before us today. Last summer, in my district, four young firefighters lost their lives fighting a fire known as the Thirty Mile Fire in Okanogan County. They were Tom Craven, Karen Fitzpatrick, Jessica Johnson, and Devin Weaver.

To most Americans, the people they see fighting wildfires in the news reports are just figures on their TV screens, and that is, of course, understandable. But to those of us in the West, those men and women are our neighbors and our friends; and it is natural for us to want to do all we can to protect those who risk so much protecting us. One of the best ways to protect lives in the future is to fully understand what caused the lost lives in the first place. That must be the unquestioned top priority of the Federal firefighting officials in the aftermath of any lethal wildfire.

My bill, H.R. 3971, is to ensure that that is done. This legislation requires